

# Lunar eclipse not much to see from here



RAYMOND E. BULLOCK

It will be better placed for observing in June.

The waning (fading) crescent moon will be four degrees above Venus on the morning of the 17th. This will not only make for a pretty display, it will help you locate Venus in the twilight. Find the moon after sunrise and look eight full-moon diameters (four degrees) below the moon. If cloud cover is a problem (never), try on the morning of the 18th; the moon will be eight degrees to the left of Venus.

New moon will be at 10:06 a.m. on May 21. The moon will be located between the earth and the sun and will not be visible. Its silhouette, however, will put in an appearance as the moon eclipses (covers) the sun. How much of the sun is covered depends on your location on the earth.

In the metro Detroit area a whopping 2.4 percent of the sun will be eclipsed at 9 a.m. In other words: yawn! People living farther west will see a greater percent eclipsed. We're not talking about farther west as in Ann Arbor or Lansing; try Seattle (whose weather rivals our own) where 40 percent of the sun will be eclipsed. (CAUTION: NEVER STARE DIRECTLY AT THE SUN!)

It could be possible to spot Mercury in the evening sky on the 22nd, albeit with some difficulty; it will be only two degrees above the west northwest horizon. The one-day old, waning (growing) crescent moon will be eight degrees above and to the left of Mercury. Try looking for Mercury around 9:30 p.m. but don't get frustrated if you can't find it; the situation will improve with time.

On the evening of the 24th, the crescent moon will be in Gemini. The star located 12 degrees above the moon will be Pollux (PAWL-lux), one of the heads of the twins. The head of his twin brother, marked by the star Castor, will be just to the right of Pollux. On the following night the moon will be 12 degrees to the left of Pollux.

The distance from Jupiter to Eta Vir (we can use a more casual name for our old friend Eta now) will be down to one-tenth of one degree on the evening of the 26th. Most people will not be able to see both objects with the naked-eye; Jupiter will be 300 times brighter than Eta Vir, and that contrast will all but make the star invisible, unless a telescope or binoculars are used.

Both objects will be visible with optical aid; in fact, Jupiter's four brightest moons will be spotted too. You will be able to distinguish between the moons and Eta Vir by intensity; the star will be brighter than the moons.

Notice the moon on the evening of the 27th. It will be located six degrees below Regulus (REG-yul), the "heart" of Leo the lion. Mars will be 13 degrees below and to the right of Regulus, forming a triangle with that star and the moon. Still moving eastward

about one-half of a degree per day, Mars will pass Regulus in 26 days.

First quarter moon will be at 2:21 p.m. on May 28. The moon will have completed the first quarter of its orbit around the earth. It will be found in the south at sunset, and will set after midnight.

May 29 is THIS evening: Jupiter and Eta Vir have their rendezvous! The two objects will be less

than one-tenth of a degree apart. While you may think this is about as exciting as May's solar eclipse, it is not often that a bright planet appears so close to a reasonably bright star, and that makes it worthy of attention. Also, the moon will be 11 degrees to the left of Jupiter, and its scattered light will add to Jupiter's own. (Remember to use binoculars to spot Eta Vir.)

On the evening of the 30th the moon will be six degrees below

Jupiter, and on the 31st the moon will be two degrees below Spica.

The evening of the 31st is also an excellent time to look for Mercury in the west northwest. It will be six degrees (12 full-moon diameters) above the horizon, looking like a star in the glow of evening twilight. Mercury will be favorably placed for spotting well into June.

An excellent aid for learning constellations and keeping up to

date with the sky is the monthly "Sky Calendar." A one-year subscription is \$6 and is available from the Abrams Planetarium, Michigan State University, East Lansing, 48824.

Raymond Bullock is the former coordinator of the planetarium and observatory at the Cranbrook Institute of Science, Bloomfield Hills. He works for a Troy laser company in Troy specializing in laser displays and effects.

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## Hunger walk is Saturday

Walkers can burn calories and stave off hunger for many homeless and poor in the Weight Watchers 4-mile Walk Away Hunger event in Southfield Saturday.

The walk will start at 9:15 a.m. from the Southfield Civic Center, 26000 Evergreen, and will be led by Southfield Mayor Donald Francasi and Weight Watchers Group president Florine Mark.

The group invites local walkers, dieters, friends, clubs and civic organizations to join the walk and bring a bag of groceries to be donated to the Hunger Aid Coalition of Detroit.

"Weight Watchers wants to share its 30 years of success by collecting tons of food through Walk Away Hunger events across the U.S. and Canada," Mark said. "We hope to make a real impact on hunger and draw attention to a real need."

Registration begins at 8:30 a.m. Entertainment, refreshments and T-shirts will be provided. For more information contact Weight Watchers at 1-800-487-4777.

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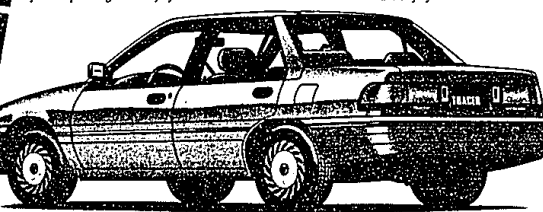
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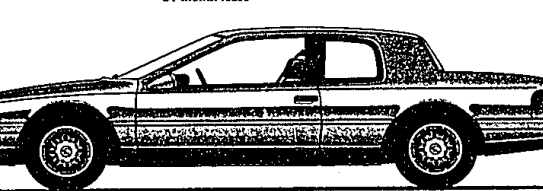
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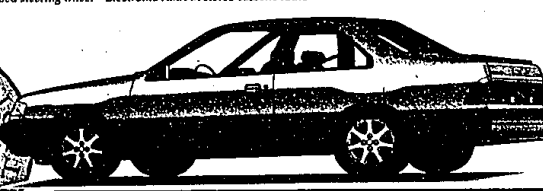


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